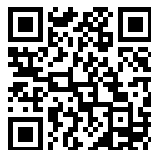

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SOCIAL REFORM.

A Lecture.

BY J. W. CUMMINGS, D. D.,
OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY.

New York
R. C. Cummings
366 Bowery

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The Mariners who from some goodly city go down to the sea in ships may serve as an emblem of men journeying in various nationalities over the ocean of life. There be among travellers, those who gaze with regret on the fast-receding shore of home, while others look forward with delight to the freedom, renown, or gold which awaits them in some happier land far away towards the setting sun. Thus some nations seem to live wholly upon the Past, some wholly upon the Future. The Hebrew of old thanked the Past only for a Promise. His eye was strained to pierce the mist of coming time and discern the first twinkling of Jacob's rising star. Europe roused from her mediæval slumber, built the temple of wisdom from a fragmentary mass of recollections. Light was sought in the folds of ancient manuscripts, Kings held festivals upon the discovery of a classic painting, and Sages wept for very joy over a Spartan coin, or the remnant of an Athenian statue. Such influences in great measure determine the tone and character of civilization. A people may settle down in the

apathy of unconcern upon the Present, and like the once powerful Ottoman Empire allow its nationality to become stagnant and dead, but then its influence will be trifling for good or evil. Our own country in reference to which especially, I wish to lay before you some thoughts upon Social Reform—the favorite theme of the Age—is yet in vigorous youth and has its future before it. But at the same time, it has borrowed much from the Past, in its intercourse with older nations, and would to God it had borrowed nothing but good. It is widely proclaimed on all sides that evil influences from abroad, and carelessness at home have already allowed much that needs reform to creep into our social system. We must now make our preparations and agree upon our plans for the future or it will soon be too late. The sunny regions of South America were settled and peopled by a noble race of Europeans before the Puritan moored his Bark near Plymouth Rock or the Catholic sang his Te-Deum at St. Mary's. Nobles and warriors sat in council in Mexico, science and arts flourished and Religion's warning voice was heard in Peru, Brazil, and Paraguay long before Washington girded on his sword or the Revolutionary cannon was heard upon Bunker Hill. But vice begat weakness in those favored lands, and disunion completed the social ruin which impiety had begun. Have we profited by the signs and warnings which are held forth to us by the sad experience of our neighbors? Alas! in many things we tread in the footsteps of the dead republics of the Past, and are using the strength of our youth to bring on the wretchednesses of premature old age.

This is a bold statement, Ladies and Gentlemen, and yet a few general facts will show it to be a sad truth. Far be it from me to speak of our noble country in words that may even seem to be unfilial and disrespectful, or to dwell upon her faults unless with a good, a generous purpose in view. If I succeed in drawing your attention to some of the dangers that threaten our social welfare with disturbance, and in enlisting your influence to avert them, then my labor will be well rewarded, and my remarks fully justified. Let us look for a few moments upon the dark, and sorrowful side of the great social picture. Luxury is everywhere on the increase. Avarice has its myriad inventions at work to amass ill-gotten wealth. Jealousy and ambition fire man against man, city against city, state against state, and trample upon the laws established by the wisdom of our fathers. Instruction becomes the tool of licentiousness, and the indecent publications with

which the public press seems to apply in practice the ungodliness which had been theoretically taught in the School, the College, and the University. The lower haunts of our great cities fester with pauperism, intemperance, corruption and banded lawlessness which emulate the sorriest degradation of London and Paris. I would I were able to prove that in country towns and villages the still-remaining simplicity, continence, and honesty of our fathers, cheer the heart of him who goes forth seeking to breathe a purer moral atmosphere among the tranquil beauties of nature. Juvenile depravity is frightfully on the increase and the police reports of each year prove a spread and magnitude of crime greater than that of the preceding year. The country is flooded with ceaseless reports of dishonesty in monied men, and monied institutions, invasions of the sanctuary of married life, and divorces granted in hundreds by state-authority. The official returns of Asylums, Hospitals, and Prisons, show the appalling ravages of disease and insanity brought on by crime, and almost every newspaper you open startles you with the recital of deeds of blood done in our most populous and enlightened Districts. Even the cypher of Suicide has risen to a degree that is quoted elsewhere as a proof of uncommon disorder. Scientific inquiry proves that not only drugs, spices, wines, and liquors, but even the commonest articles of food and drink sold by shopkeepers as genuine, are adulterated with earth, metal, paint and other poisonous ingredients destructive of human life. But enough of the cheerless annals of social corruption. Let us turn away from the dark details they unfold; yet as we do so can we wonder that the cry from every quarter should be "Reform, Reform?"—"Reform!" Sure enough; but where is it to come from, how is it to be done? The people of Europe are crying out for Reform in many countries and the great engine they seem to think will effect it is Popular Government. "Away with your Kings," writes the Italian Mazzini. "Down with your Emperors," cries the Hungarian Kossuth.—"No more of Royalty," screams the Frenchman Ledru Rollin. "We must, we shall have a Republic," sings the poetical Young Irelander; "we will not be still till we get one," vows the prosaic German Democrat. In our country we have never had practically anything but a Republic, a popular Government. We have in all conscience enough of liberty, and yet social evils of a very threatening nature exist, and call for a remedy. In Europe the cry is again, "Educate, Educate." "The people are bad and unhappy only because they are ignorant," cry the

secret societies and political clubs, from the Demagogues of the Central Committee in London at the one end, to the malcontents of the Frankfort Diet at the other. "Give the people schools," they say, "give them instruction, and verily you shall see them live in sweet peace and die in fat plenty." Well, in this country, the school-master is abroad everywhere, and school-houses abound. An American who cannot write is seldom to be met with, one who cannot read still more seldom, and one who cannot *calculate*, never. Yet our social difficulties are great and growing, and the worst offences are not committed by the unlettered, but by educated men. Turn again to Europe, the next cry is "Toleration;" "Religious Toleration," cries the English tourist and the German traveller at Rome. "Equal Toleration," prays the Evangelical Preacher who devotes himself and his growing family to the protestantizing of Corfu and Malta. "Toleration" sighs the poor tract-pedlar, who, bent upon proclaiming that the Priests are wicked, and the Pope a very wicked man indeed, brings that interesting news to the Catalonian mountaineer, or the Hibernian peasant, and is treated to a sound thrashing for his impudence. But in his country we have all of us Toleration to our heart's content even for the most intolerable doctrines. Yet though doctors otherwise disagree, they unite in declaring that things here are morally going to wreck as fast as they can. Is there no light to be got from the boasted programme of the modern Reformers of Europe? "Improvement," they cry again. "Improvement will bring about the happy social Millenium!" Yet wise men tremble for us, though we have rail-roads enough to belt around Europe twice, and something to spare, though the Mississippi river alone floats more steamboats than all the inland waters of the mother continent, though after presumptuously whipping our venerable ancestor twice on our ground, we beat him last year on his own waters and under the eyes of his own Queen. All the enthusiasts and philanthropists who profess to teach us how to make this country great in a moral point of view as she is in other respects must admit the truth of these statements, and so must all politicians, decent or otherwise, of either party, both those who came down Salt River on last election day, and those who on the same occasion got a through ticket to go up. Classify the Reformers as you choose. Take up the religious reformers first, and then the secular, or first the secular, and then the religious. These men admit all the facts brought forward, yet what do they do in consequence? Nothing, or only

enough to prove their failure. The power that would marshal the populations of North America under the principles of justice, forbearance, charity, self-denial, and constancy, must be a strong power. It must be strong in its constitution, strong in its expression, and strong in its effects. We have on one side the country, her laws, her institutions. We want on the other some noble energy, more sacred than the law, more powerful than the will of the people, more universal than the government, more ancient than the memory of its founders. There are several heads under which you can class the modern systems of improvement, and the classification will show in each case that they have not the energy of which we speak. The secular schemers give us economical reforms, social reforms, political reforms. The first make either the state irresponsible, or the individual irresponsible, and the weaker of the two is destroyed. The second break the most sacred ties, and trample under foot the most undoubted rights to make room for capricious agreements. The third can only succeed when law and order are sacrificed to a Goddess of Liberty—that makes Passion and Anarchy ministers at her fearful Altars. Progressionists, in the view we now take of their schemes, attempt to lift up matter into the order of spirit and thought, and bring down thought and spirit to a chaotic fusion between them and matter.—Their progress is a weary excursion through Swedenborgianism, Transcendentalism, Mesmerism, Animal and Mental Magnetism, Clairvoyance, Electro-Biology, Fourierism, Socialism, Communism, Mormonism and RAPPING-ism. It ends by producing the same effects as alcohol, opium and lunacy. Reformers of the individual have succeeded in taking away the peace of mind they cannot restore from credulous and confiding persons. Domestic reformers have revived pagan orgies in the pitiful farce of “Women’s Rights” and Bloomerism. To the public and national principles which they have substituted for our old-fashioned honesty and straight-forwardness we owe our ridiculous position as a nation whether we bully and insult Austria, Spain and Mexico, because we think they are weak, or allow England to bully and insult us because we think she is strong. Sectarian schemers and innovators have had the whole country open to them from the beginning. What fruits of civilization has their training brought forth? Have they by patiently advancing their principles, or fearlessly recording their censure, or at least resolutely withholding their sanction, have they kept off the confusion of mind, the pride of will, the base-

ness of heart that now threatens the country with destruction?— Neither they nor the secular schemers have lacked opportunities to show what they could do. They possess abundance of wealth, they have been encouraged by popular favor, they have had genius and talent in their leaders, brilliancy and boldness in the schemes they proposed.— But what can all this do when their utmost advance ends in unfixedness and doubt! They themselves do not believe in what they teach. They dare not condemn those who are altogether opposed to them, they insist upon no right to claim submission, they have no legitimate organization. Always reckless and often insincere, intellectually dishonest when not practically corrupt, they engage in what is an unscrupulous plot, or at best a dangerous experiment.

Let us sum up the merits of the numberless plans that are so loudly recommended as a universal remedy for the social evils of our day. As they are opposed to everything supernatural they seek for a God in the material world from which they spring. Their progressive activity is a fitful vibration between two extremes, one of which is Individualism, the other Universalism. One asserts the divinity of man, the other the divinity of the world. Take up any sect or system grounded upon irresponsible private judgement, and follow it logically and you must fall down and worship Self, as the source of all goodness and wisdom. Take up any of the generalizing isms of the day as they stretch from the subtlest Transcendentalism down to the grossest Socialism and Communism and you can resolve it by strict reasoning into vague and hopeless Pantheism; where it will stop unless it goes on to insanity and self-destruction.

You have probably observed, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I endeavor by a fair and gradual process to reach the principle of Christian civilization, and social improvement as practically explained by the One True Church; and at the same, that I avoid discussing the various sectarian systems in the country, unless in as much as they are philosophical and social engines. They are of course inefficient in this point of view because they are theologically false. What the light of revelation shows to be an error the light of reason can never show to be a truth. Protestantism from its nature and principles must become popularized and secularized, and must work as a political system.— Whenever the changing interests and caprices of the multitude turn away from a political scheme once popular, Protestantism must turn away from it too, and still follow the people perhaps in the most op-

posite direction,—or perish. Nor is it more consistent when it seeks to gain support from the civil power by serving its ends against the people. Under a James Ist it must assert the divine right of Kings, and endorse Despotism, under a Cromwell assert the divine right of Rebellion, and endorse Treason. When the sectarian pulpits rang with resistance to the Government of England at the time of the American Revolution, the people liked the Text—praised the Sermon, and caressed the preachers. When during the late Anti-slavery excitement the pulpits resounded with similar expressions against the Government of the United States, the people disliked the Text, and discourse, and called the preacher a Woolly-Head. When the King and Parliament of Great Britain found that the new religion served their turn in robbing the Catholic Churches, Colleges and Abbeys they upheld it. Should England get into a difficulty and need money to get out of it, do you think it is likely that her rulers will scruple to seize upon the same revenues because they are held by a different set of incumbents? Those Rulers did not respect the ancient Bishops established by the grace of God, will they respect under similar circumstances the “Statutory Superintendents” established by act of Parliament? The trouble with Protestantism is, that like the celebrated egg which served Columbus to illustrate his discovery of America, it never can stand straight unless it is propped up at the sides.—If you force it to stand by itself you break its very foundation. The power which supports it rules it, and makes it most a slave where it seems to be most at home. Protestantism, indeed, makes a living, because it does not reckon without its host; but then its host reckons without Protestantism and makes it pay the expenses.—Not having faith active enough to keep itself in life, where can it find vigor enough to infuse new life into the institutions of the country?—But let us resume our theme and see now if Catholicity has any more vigorous agency to offer for the correction of social evils and abuses than the various human systems that have passed in review before us. To proceed with fairness in this matter we must notice two mistakes that are often made, one by the enemies, the other by the friends of the Church, when surveying her history and looking into her social position. The enemies identify her with abuses which are merely accidental. Her friends identify her with beauties and embellishments that are only accessory, and contingent. In history and in every day life you may meet Catholics whose conduct is sinful and scandalous;

but do you hold the Church responsible for their actions? What they do is what she forbids, and what she commands is what they will not do. You read of institutions, of cities where hypocrisy and vice go unbridled, but in most cases you owe your information to some Bishop, or Pope, or Council that interfered to correct the evil and sought to punish the offender. The traveller in the deserts of the East who approaches some far-famed monument of olden time, may see at first only the uncouth outlines of a shapeless mass, and judge perhaps that little of worth can be found in the rude pile before him. But as he draws nearer and nearer he is undeceived, and gazes with intense delight on one of the noblest structures of Memphis, Thebes, or Palmyra, although its fair proportions are marred and partially hidden beneath the gathering sands of the desert. Thus stands unmoved the Church built by the hand of Christ; the abuses which attempt to deface the beauty of her divine form are like sand and dust which the sweeping vicissitudes of time pile up around her to-day, and scatter and whirl away on the morrow.

On the other hand the admirers of the holy Daughter of Sion's eternal King are so struck with the costliness, and splendor of her royal garments, that their language seems to grow cold and unimpassioned when they go on to tell of her inward beauty and heavenly grace. Who can read without a genial thrill of delight the annals of the Church, and mark her long, and patient and persevering efforts to polish the taste, to elevate the conceptions and habits of nations?—But let us not forget in our admiration for our divine mother that in all these things, we see only the bright instruments she is pleased to use, we admire only the graceful handmaids she calls around her and trains to go with her towards the accomplishment of a nobler and more exalted task. Praise if you choose the majesty of her architecture, the sublimity of her painting, the chasteness of her sculpture, the sweetness of her music, the power of her eloquence, the depth of her learning, but remember that these are beauties and embellishments, not theological evidences. They are superb avenues all radiating from a great central temple and leading back to it, not the solid foundations of the temple itself. He who wanders in our primeval forests when the Indian Summer throws its dreamy lustre over the landscape finds every sense delighted by some gentle greeting. The fragrancy of the wild-flowers, the countless tints of the foliage above him varying from pale to orange and from dark evergreen to deep

crimson, the songs of the woodland choristers perched upon the branches, and the hum of insects sporting in the mellow sunlight, the babbling brook and the long-drawn aisle of trees on its borders, would each hold forth its charms and call for its meed of admiration. But who so simple as to dwell on such a sight without sending his thoughts beyond the fleeting sheen to admire the ever-enduring cause which gives back in due season those fast-fading features of sylvan beauty. Winter soon comes and the woodland choir is silent, the perfume and comeliness of flowers and trees gladden the scene no more, yet vainly does the storm wrestle with the sturdy boughs and unbending trunk of the forest-oak. Thus vary the outward beauties of the Church, as they are either torn from her brow by the hand of the despoiler, or drop off withered by the chill breath of Time,—while the majestic trunk with its living branches spread out even to the ends of the earth decays not, but remains unharmed by any passing storm, remains unshaken for ever.

The Church is still a fond Mother whether she chide and threaten the wayward, or comfort and encourage the docile. Amid the gloom and damp of the Catacombs she is as lovely as upon the throne of the Cæsars. Whatsoever has merited and received the seal of her divine sanction on earth is truly beautiful, and recognized and honored as such in heaven; whether it be in the Christian Servant, or his Christian Lord, in the toil-worn peasant, or in the generous youth, in the sequestered Anchorite, or the devoutly heroic Nun, in the unresisting Martyr, or the triumphant Crusader.

Instances of the loveliness of the Church may serve like the artistic touch of the master upon the instrument he takes in hand announcing to the listener what his expectations may be; but it is only when the full tide of harmony gushes forth from orchestra and chorus blending together a thousand various notes in one great melodious stream that one can realize the depth and power of the most angelic among the Arts. Thus it is only when the christian mind embraces altogether the doctrines, duties, Sacraments, virtues, miracles, memories of olden time and examples of modern date, that all the glorious varieties and harmonies of the Kingdom of Christ upon earth begin to be understood.

From what, Ladies and Gentlemen, are we to consider that the strength of the Catholic Church, her strong words, strong actions, strong unyielding spirit proceed? Her strength is two-fold; it is in-

terior, it is exterior. She is strong because she is conscious of her divine life, her imperishable nature. Hence the uncompromising stand she takes in the world. Scarcely has she entered upon her mission on Earth and been placed like her Divine Founder for the resurrection and the ruin of many when meeting undismayed all the agencies calling themselves holy, religious, inspired—she proceeds at once to tear the charter of their supposed rights and brands their children with illegitimacy. Why does she proclaim that she only has the truth—that she has all truth? She does not shrink from the responsibility of answering that she is infallible! If asked for her proofs, the pledged word of God that she shall not fail is her reply, When called upon to undergo tests the most cruel, the most degrading, that wicked men and fallen angels combined can devise, she fears not the consequences, because she is immortal. None can take away her life. At the tyrant's command she walks unmoved amid armed legions to the judgement hall, the prison, and the stake. If you are her enemy she knows full well, that she shall live to hear your passing-bell—if you become her friend, that it shall be hers to drop a tear of compassion upon your tomb. The strength of her position on such grounds can never be exaggerated. She holds and announces that salvation is not possible out of her fold to any one who knows, or ought to know, that she is the One True Church. Those who are not Catholics can never understand why, or how it is that the Catholic Church engrosses all the affections of her children—so that life has no treasure that can bribe them to leave her, death has no terror that can drive them to desert her. It is that they share in her consciousness of the divinity that abides in her, and with her until the end of the world. She teaches them really and truly to worship Christ as God whether appearing in his Transfiguration between two Prophets, and surrounded by glory, or hanging between two thieves on a cross to consummate his Passion. She does not seek to refine the doctrines of her Lord so as to suit the tastes of an age which calls itself enlightened. She does not seek to be RESPECTABLE. Her Lord did not seek to be RESPECTABLE. She leans not on popularity, nor did her Divine Founder. A popular assembly cried out “Crucify him, Crucify him!” This ardent, unswerving faith comes from above; it is the indwelling of the divine Spirit felt to be real, and known to be perpetual, that makes all her inward strength. God is with her intimately, always; his mind is her mind, his will is her will. When she acts it is He

who leads her, when she triumphs it is because He sustains her. He allows her to be tried and afflicted in her outward person, her inward peace and security can never be lost; for He who is with her is her safety and life.

Let us now turn to the exterior strength of the church, and show its effects upon society at large. In this we shall behold the church unfolding her practical influences. The various modern systems, whose port of destination is that Araby the blest Social Improvement—carry as we have seen a great deal too much sail and too little ballast, ever to reach that or any haven of rest in safety. The first fruit of the earnest inward energy of the church is her outward independence. The church is a kingdom in herself. She stands on ground which is all her own and hers alone—she needs in no case to fall back on any but her own pledged resources. No government establishment and no popular acceptance of her platform are necessary to the success of her undertakings. To secure an efficient remedy for our social ailments she may not like the Alchemist of old wait for a lucky conjunction of the stars, she need not leave the patient in anguish until a favorable crisis occurs or till he reaches the grand climacteric; such electrifying prescriptions for the body politic as a sudden revolution, or a *coup d'état* from no part of her sanatory resources.—Give her men, women and children in a clear field, and she will marshal them wisely and lead them on to victory without advice from friends or warning from foes. Confusion will ensue, only when a government or a people should act as if her divine power were likely to fail unless aided by their wisdom, armed with secular weapons, and guarded by a shield of earthly temper.

She is helped best when let alone. Left to herself she is left in all her might. In every event, however, she asks no man's leave to raise her voice under any roof or bend her knee in worship on any floor of his realms. We love the counsels of a voice that is free, unprompted, unpurchasable; and where is there a voice more independent than that of the Catholic church? A great battle is now waged in the world; it is a struggle for pre-eminence between State Despotism on the one side, and Popular Licence on the other. Tell me on which side does the church range herself? on neither one nor the other. She is persecuted by both. Her children, her Priests even, languish in the dungeons of the one, and are robbed and exiled by the other. If in the raging of that storm which so lately swept over Eu-

rope, the successor of St. Peter had seen fit to steer his Bark towards these peaceful shores, and while here, in our midst, even in this hospitable city, had been respectfully asked: Who gave him greater cause to complain, the Rulers or the Populace of Europe?—neither promptly nor unhesitatingly could the venerable pontiff have replied to such a question. In the name of the Roman people, a mercenary gang of adventurers from every quarter of the globe drove the Ninth Pius from the same throne from which the Seventh Pius was torn by the iron hand of an imperial despot. The sighs and groans of Catholics, thrust by the penal laws of the imperial council-chamber of St. Petersburg into the frozen caves of Siberia, mingle at the gates of heaven with the prayers of Catholic Ireland against the penal laws of a British House of Commons. The King of Sardinia banished from his states the Archbishop of Turin, and the Bishop of Cagliari. Those exiled Prelates may soon receive in London perhaps, perhaps in Rome, the kiss of peace from the Bishop of Carthage, and the Archbishop of Bogota, driven from their Sees by the *liberal* President and Congress of the Republic of New Granada. We have seen that no freedom of speech greater than that of the Catholic church can be enjoyed or needed on earth—and what is the purpose and purport of her speaking? Does she draw from the sources which the pretended reformers love to frequent? Does she give us nothing but vague declamations upon the beautiful and the good? Does she tell us to listen to the mandates of unsupported reason, leaving meanwhile us and our fatally weak adviser at the mercy of Passion, Fear, Uncertainty and Despair? Does she send us to go peering among the clouds in search of knowledge, with the transcendentalist, to borrow with him from poetry nothing but its fine phrenzy—to hearken with him to the divine utterances contained in the whispering of breeze, and the babbling of brook, or steal into the nursery to read wonderful lessons of wisdom in “baby’s eyes.” Or, are we advised to give up in despair, all these still, small voices and arousing with the radical Politician the interesting animal called “Vox Populi,” learn eternal verity from his amiable growl? Perchance, after the example of the ancient Roman Augurs, who studied to interpret learnedly the prating of magpies and the cackling of geese, we may be sent by her direction to the “Women’s Rights Convention” and attempt to decipher the same kind of oracles with equally profound and satisfactory results? Or, does she bid us stoop to hear the god of the Rochester Knockers

thump out queer information from the back of dusty bureaux and the legs of tables and chairs? Unbounded as may be the circle of her resources, it reaches not so far but must be overstepped by the traveller who seeks for the bourne of this undiscovered country of mist and vapor. *Her* principles are clear and strong; pure as gold, and lasting as the diamond, and the source from which she draws them, the treasury of her inward faith. They are not one thing here and another there; white to-day and black to-morrow; but settled and defined over all time and through all space. Laying open her Catechism she holds over it the unquenchable torch of Faith that the votary of holy science may read and understand. The first Chapter which explains the natural law, and the end of man's creation was taught and understood in the garden of Eden. The second Chapter containing the Commandments of God was written upon tablets of stone, under dictation from the voice of Jehovah upon Mount Sinai. The third embracing the Apostle's Creed is a record of what Jesus taught in Judea, and the chosen twelve repeated all over the earth. The "Our Father," breathed from the heart of the God-man sketches perfect civilisation in the eloquence of prayer, when it raises the fervent aspiration that the "Kingdom of God may come, and that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." Furnished with good principles and taught to understand them aright, man is fairly fitted to enter Social life. The church thus prepares all who hearken to her voice, and laying the foundation broad and deep, she does not disappoint the beholders when she commences to build. Principles, however, must be upheld by powerful motives of good action. Systems that are all human, and merely human can furnish none but merely human motives. They must make all human responsibility begin and end in the fear of temporal evil, and the love of temporal good.—Modern Philosophy, when not lost in visions of dreamy and impracticable virtue, can only promise man, that if he is good, he shall most assuredly be well fed and well clad and have a good time, but that if he is wicked, there is nothing too bad he may not meet withal. This reduces man to the level of the brute creation, and would make it not too severe to apply to him the expression of the Dutch lecturer on Natural History, when he said: "Gentlemen, the animal we come to now is called the swine; and richly does he deserve that name." The promised reward of the Church for good behavior is freedom, peace, and happiness here, and eternal blessedness unalloyed by evil here-

after. To the wavering she lays bare the heart of the wicked man a prey to every insatiable passion, even in the midst of seeming delight, while all shall end for him in eternal misery.

Man can be lifted up to the standard of civilization, only by insisting, as the Church does, that he shall rise above it. In obedience to her every man, in every place, and at every time, must at least *mean* to be right, and mean to do well. "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord;" a fear which while it binds man to the service of the All-Powerful, frees him from the fear of King and people, of all power that is not infinite. To all the rewards and punishments which just laws and wise government hold out to form the good citizen she adds all the weight of the powers that form the good christian.

She even goes farther than giving good principles and strong motives to do right. She gives aid to do right, and begins her mission practically where even the best of human systems must end theirs.—Let us condense under a few heads the aids by which the Church helps man to bear all the burdens that may fall to his lot during life, and not sink under them till he safely reach the threshold of eternity.

First, then, she has in her ministry legitimate organs — all over the world; and through them she applies to each person, in every instance, the enactments of general morality. She applies them to all with authority, binding the great as well as the small. The first assailant of the soul who falls by her hand is the demon of Doubt: Doubt, alas! that chills the rising energy, and stifles the good resolves of so many noble hearts outside of her pale. She does not, like her adversaries, continually throw man back upon his own individuality. She speaks precisely when he needs it; and when all others have spoken in vain, and are silent, then her voice is heard like the voice of Daniel in the halls of Belshazzar. Secondly; she and she alone, is the channel through which the saving grace of God is dispensed to man. This stream of spiritual life is directed to meet each one's particular need, as the rain and dew of heaven form the timely supply of plants, giving moisture and freshness to the parched and drooping grass, spreading out to the thin leaf of the forest and the juicy berry of the wilderness, thickening into the mellow pulp of the apple and pear of the orchard, and as they circulate through the long branches and delicate tendrils of the vine, giving to its generous clusters wherewith to bloom and blush and ripen beneath the rays of the sun. Thirdly, she teaches *prayer*. She teaches that if it is humble, — it is all-powerful.

Prayers become an unfailing resource to be called upon in every and any case of need — they draw on the treasury of Heaven, which we never can exhaust. By grace we can do all things. Do we need light for the mind? The grace of God is light. Do we need strength for the will? The grace of God is strength. How beautiful are the relations between prayer and corresponding grace! As our prayer ascends to Heaven, grace descends to us on earth. Fourth: she administers Sacraments. The Sacraments are grants of heaven-born energy apportioned to each stage of life. Baptism opens the entrance into the Christian fold. Confirmation fits the child to enter the world. The Eucharist and Holy Penance sustain and raise man up through life, and Extreme Unction as he goes out blesses his transit to his eternal home. Holy Order and Matrimony meanwhile perpetuate the Sacraments by perpetuating the succession of those who administer and of those who receive them. These sacramental channels of superhuman energy are like fountains opening upon the highway of life at proper intervals for the comfort of wayfaring man. From Baptism at his first setting out along and through his life-time, even to Extreme Unction, which is at the end of the journey, the Christian goes ever hopefully on; for he never loses sight of these blessed fountains, they are always within his reach, scarce does he grow weary and faint when he sees near him some life-giving source to renew his energies. In the fifth and the last place, we may sum up all in Charity, which is indeed the true love of God for his own sake, and the true love of our neighbor for the sake of God. The love of God is a central point of light, and the love of our neighbor, like the countless rays which diverge in every direction, conveying brightness and heat into every spot where grief is to be assuaged or want relieved. The human heart of Protestantism cannot yearn with true charity towards the wretched, the despised, *the fallen*. She may pity the poor, she never can respect them, but must feel that giving to poverty she degrades it. She goes not to the victim of want and remorse who is unable to go to her; or should she indeed in kindness of feeling seek out the abode of misery, she stands powerless by the bedside of the lonely sufferer. The Church alone can breathe into the ear of the unfortunate — “Arise, thy sins are forgiven thee.” The sinner derives courage from the mercy which is extended even to him; and then in the words of a Catholic poet:

“Still, still though haste and fraud and strife
 Have strained the shining web of life
 Sweet Hope the growing woof renews
 In all its old enchanting hues.”

To recapitulate and condense in a few words these several thoughts:—Man, by his own natural power, cannot bring about that social reform which all grant to be so much needed. All human systems which are proposed to enable man to bring about this reform add nothing to his natural power. The Church alone can give him supernatural principles, motives, and aids, and so she alone can supply him with the superior energy which he stands in need of. Man, then, can get from the Church alone power enough to bring about social reform. Let him, therefore, seek it in her alone. The sooner mankind is convinced of this truth, and acts up to this conviction; the better for man and for society—for then indeed social reform may be attainable on earth. The records of history prove that the Church has strengthened and refined the social condition of nations; that she has done so successfully wherever man has not interfered to hinder and confuse the sublime work, which, blinded by his vanity and self-love, he could not, or would not, understand.

At different times, and in different grades of civilization, the Church has formed social institutions where they were unknown or forgotten, reformed them where they tended to destruction. Let us examine a few instances of her strength in this connection. The social system she found in Greece and Asia Minor was refined to fastidiousness. Art was the handmaid of Luxury, and Genius a caterer for the Passions. The people lived in idleness, but in an idleness which they knew how to diversify with amusements and invest even with dignity. Yet their silken repose grew irksome from very satiety of pleasure. The Church taught them that there was something higher and nobler to live for than ingenious recreation, and opened a new era in the history of their language and of their national life. She had to deal with a system more powerful and less refined in Rome. The military spirit which pervaded society there mapped out its operations under the guidance of ambition. Bold enterprise produced dramatic pageants, and often, lasting and noble works. The Church taught Rome that the nature of man was not imperial, and obtained respect for the humility of the Cross in time to save much

through that sacred emblem, where all must otherwise have perished through pride. . . . The wild hordes of Northmen who spread over the West after the downfall of the Roman Colossus brought with them a spirit of restlessness and impulse, ignorance, and unruly passion, which knew no man as a neighbor, and feared no law but force. She curbed their savage rapacity, and made them less body and more soul. Ignorance gradually passed away under her gentle sway, and where war was the rule and peace the exception, war became the exception and peace the rule.

The Church indeed in her course fell in with some simple populations which were pastoral and agricultural ; but they were reduced almost to the brute instincts of the flocks and herds they tended, and material almost as the turf from which their toil wrung a scanty subsistence. They soon learned that all their interests were not imbedded in the soil over which they bent, and could thrive elsewhere than in the grass and herbs which mantled its surface. She taught them to fear more than the flash of lightning, or the rolling of thunder, things not seen by the eye, or heard by the ear of flesh. She taught them to love and fear God, who created man and the world, and all that is terrible or good therein. The civilization of India and China — incipient or effete — crude or worn-out — has afforded hitherto but partial opportunities for the exercise of her benign influence. But enough has been seen to assure us that she alone has power enough to stimulate the sluggish current, to re-ignite the smouldering fire of life in those nationalities dying from sheer inanition.

The social system of the United States is peculiar to itself, and different from those mentioned above. Greek cunning is surpassed by the sharper edge of Yankee cuteness, and the institutionism of Rome by America's fondness for hobbies. Material amelioration and progress is the national aim ; Agriculture and Commerce the means. The individual is admired and followed chiefly as he is the nucleus of an enterprise, a system, an institution. We are undecided and informal as yet in regard to principle. Power and cleverness of effect is admired more than justness of cause, or purity of motive, activity more than soundness. History may yet, perhaps, speak of us as the greatest nation of the earth. Still, there is reason to fear, that we may figure in her pages like the Phenicians, roaming at large as commercial warriors, civilizers and thieves ; or like the Egyptians, narrowed into refined seclusion, selfish greatness, and erudite laziness. Our

hero so far is the *smart* man that goes ahead. It is bruited abroad, and some suspect with truth, that we are a little fond of money ! We like the power of virtue very well, but the power of steam better. We trade no longer in wooden nutmegs, but we double our profits on the real ones. We like to get along in the world — honestly, if it can be done — but to go ahead anyhow. We are great in little things, and little in great things. We are great inventors, but our inventions are often discoveries in natural philosophy, or physical appliances, making mind the slave of matter. We polish and perfect more than we create, and our progress is not the progress of the whole social and moral body ; it is the high-pressure developement of details. We go on torturing and stretching, simplifying and condensing, twisting and turning and whittling away, and decomposing nature by so many plans and specifications, that we are in danger of ending some fine day by decomposing ourselves. Our society wants a strong undercurrent of moral principle producing an honest, healthy, chivalric national tone. It must be patiently taught to esteem these things enough to labor towards their acquirement. We have a hearty and active social body ; we want a great social soul to animate it. The matter in this case is all right ; it is the spirit that gives reason to fear. The institutions of the country are good ; they must be preserved. Abuses have crept in ; they must be reformed. Difficulties are ahead ; they must be overcome. Where is the source from which the country must drink in this inward life, health, and strength ? Ladies and Gentlemen, it is the Catholic Church, — the Catholic Church alone.

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